



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

Honorable Allen J. Ellender, Chairman
Committee on Agriculture and Forestry
United States Senate

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in reply to your request of February 6, 1967, for a report on S. 225, a bill "To provide for the control of noxious plants on land under the control or jurisdiction of the Federal Government."

We would have no objection to the enactment of S. 225 if amended as suggested herein.

S. 225 would authorize any State commissioner of agriculture or other proper agency head of any State in which there is in effect a program for the control of noxious plants to enter upon any Federal land in such State, with prior permission of and in accordance with the program acceptable to the agency head administering such Federal land, and destroy by appropriate methods noxious plants growing on such land if (1) the same procedure required by the State program with respect to privately owned land has been followed, and (2) the Federal agency involved has failed to comply with the requirements of such program. To the extent that funds have been appropriated to Federal Departments and agencies specifically for carrying out the purposes of this legislation, the Federal Government would be required to reimburse any State incurring expenses for the above type of plant control upon presentation of an itemized account of such expenses.

This Department has long recognized the desirability and need for noxious plant control on both public and private land. We conduct a comprehensive research program on the biology and effective control of noxious plants and their effects on crop and range lands. On the National Forests, National Grasslands, and other areas we administer we have furthered control efforts insofar as available funds permit. It is the policy of the Department of Agriculture to attain close Federal-State-Private cooperation in the planning and conduct of noxious plant control programs. Where State funds are available we may allow State officials to enter our lands for control purposes.

We also recognize that it has not always been feasible, within the funds available, to devote sufficient funds to the control of noxious plants on our lands to create an effective control program. We understand the same is true as to certain other Departments.

As a result, in those States with good administration of adequate noxious plant control laws, State and local officials may have reason to be concerned about the lack of control on Federally-administered lands. Certainly, Federal lands which are infested with noxious plants may well serve as a source of infestation and reinfestation of noxious plants on private lands.

Legislation along the lines of S. 225 would be beneficial in supporting State programs for noxious plant control. However, we believe S. 225 should be clarified with respect to the relationship between Federal and State agencies and the availability of funds to the States. To accomplish this we have prepared an amendment which is in the nature of a substitute to S. 225. The substitute bill is attached.

The Bureau of the Budget advises that it has no objection to the presentation of this report from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Sincerely yours,

Enclosure